(c) and (d) The release of subsidy to fertilizer units is a continuous process. Thus, at any point in time there are certain current subsidy dues which are under process for payment to various fertilizer units in the country. Further, subsidy is released based on claims submitted by various companies and do not relate directly to any particular State.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) In view of (e) above, the question does not arise.

Re-opening of Talcher

†30. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the closed units of Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. (FCIL) located at Talcher in Orissa is likely to be operationalized in near future;

(b) if so, the concrete steps taken so far in this direction; and

(c) by when the production work would be restarted in the unit of FCIL located at Talcher?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) Pursuant to decision taken by the Government on 12th April, 2007 to examine the feasibility of reviving the various closed units of FCIL and HFCL subject to the confirmed availability of gas, the techno-economic feasibility of revival of the various closed units was examined. It was found that except for the existing plant machinery, the basic infrastructure, *viz.* land, water, electricity, railway siding, silos etc. could be gainfully utilized for setting up of new brown field urea projects, subject to availability of natural gas. Keeping in view the above, the Government on 30.10.2008 approved constitution of an Empowered Committee of Secretaries to look into all financial models for revival of each of the closed units along with their other linkages including gas. The Government has also accorded in principle approval for considering write-off of Government of India loans and interest liabilities of FCIL and HFCL. However, final decision on the waiver will be taken when fully tied-up proposals are received by the Government. Pursuant to the Government's decisions, the Empowered Committee of Secretaries (ECOS) has been constituted and all options for revival of the various closed units including the Talcher unit of FCIL, are being examined by the ECOS. As regards the commencement of production in Talcher plant of FCIL, it is not feasible to indicate a time frame at this stage.

Selling of PDS wheat and rice in open market

31. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether during last three years, Rs. 31,585.98 crore worth of wheat and rice meant for PDS and during 2006 alone, Rs. 11336.98 crore worth of PDS foodgrains were sold into the market illegally;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether every year, India's poor are cheated out of 53.3 per cent of wheat and 39 per cent of rice meant for them;

(c) if so, the details thereof indicating the States which are the worst affected;

(d) the action taken against guilty; and

(e) the corrective steps taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No Sir. This amount of illegal sale of TPDS foodgrains in open market was wrongly mentioned in a Press Report in the Times of India dated 17th September, 2007. This Press Report seems to have used some figures on diversion reported in the study conducted by ORG MARG. Report of ORG MARG study was received in 2005. It covered data of 2003-04 and 2004-05. This report mentioned diversion of TPDS foodgrains in a number of States. However, the amount mentioned in the Press Report is incorrect. It seems to have used economic cost of foodgrains as the basis for calculation assuming that there has been no improvement in functioning of TPDS in subsequent years, which is factually not correct.

(b) and (c) The Department of Food and Public Distribution got TPDS evaluated by ORG MARG. This evaluation covered the period of 2003-04 and 2004-05. The report received in 2005 mentioned diversion of 39% of rice and 53% of wheat under TPDS. The report mentioned that diversion was because of inclusion errors, leakages through ghost ration cards and pilferage during transportation and from Fair Price Shops. State-wise details of diversion reported by the evaluation study of ORG MARG are given in the Statement (*See* below). These figures of diversion reported in the study report were contested by most of the State Governments. Also, diversion of rice and wheat from BPL to APL family does not mean loss of the foodgrains. It results in delivery of foodgrains to unintended category of beneficiaries. After this study, State and UT Governments have taken a number of steps to check leakages, diversions and minimize identification errors, because of which diversion and leakages have got reduced.

(d) and (e) The following measures have been taken to strengthen the functioning of TPDS.

(I) A nine-point action Plan is under implementation since July, 2006. As a part of 9-Point Action Plan:

(i) 17 States have initiated computerization of TPDS transactions from their own resources.

(ii) 100.48 lakh bogus/ineligible ration cards eliminated in 14 States.

(iii) Door delivery of foodgrains to FPS being done in 16 States/UTs.

(iv) PRI's involved in vigilance committees and running of FPS in 24 States/UTs.

(v) BPL lists are being displayed at FPS in 30 States/UTs.

(vi) Review of BPL/AAY list has been undertaken in 30 States.

(vii) District and FPS wise allocation of foodgrains put on website as public scrutiny in 19 States.

(II) The concurrent evaluation of TPDS has been taken up in 26 States and UTs. The report of this concurrent evaluation has been received for 12 States. Compared to earlier findings of PEO and ORG MARG, these reports have revealed improvement in functioning of TPDS in many of these States.

(III) A model Citizens' Charter was issued by the Central Government in 1997 and again in 2006 for adoption by the State Governments/UT Administrations. A revised Citizens' Charter has been issued in July, 2007 for adoption and implementation by State/UT Governments for facilitating use by Citizens of provisions of Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 in relation to functioning of the TPDS. By now 16 State/UT Governments have adopted it.

(IV) In order to ensure increased transparency in functioning of FPSs, all State and UT Governments have been directed on 7th March, 2008 to introduce monthly certification by Village Panchayats/Vigilance Committee/Urban Local Bodies/Self Help Groups for delivery of foodgrains to ration card holders with effect from April, 2008.

(V) As a part of a Plan Scheme on strengthening of TPDS, the Department sanctions training programmes to be taken up by State and UT Governments for TPDS functionaries and members of Vigilance Committees, etc.

(VI) Digitization of PDS operations of National/State/District and Block levels all over the country is proposed to be taken up under a Plan Scheme on computerization of TPDS during the 11th Plan Period.

(VII) Introduction of Global Positioning System (GPS) has been taken up by Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu and Delhi Governments for tracking movement of vehicles carrying TPDS commodities on pilot basis to assess its effectiveness.

(VIII) For greater public scrutiny of TPDS functioning through the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005, publicity-cum-awareness campaign on TPDS is being taken up as a part of the plan scheme on strengthening of TPDS.

Statement

State-wise details of diversions reported by the evolution study of ORG MARG

States	Diversion (%)	
	Rice	Wheat
1	2	3
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Neg	Neg
Andhra Pradesh	Neg	NC
Arunachal Pradesh	64.1	96.2

1	2	3
Assam	37.2	100.0
Bihar	14.7	44.7
Chandigarh	NC	NC
Chhattisgarh	33.4	71.4
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	48.5	69.4
Daman and Diu	NC	NC
Delhi	10.5	25.1
Goa	42.9	NC
Gujarat	16.2	24.4
Haryana	NC	74.2
Himachal Pradesh	58.2	34.1
Jammu & Kashmir	64.3	13.5
Jharkhand	Neg	37.5
Karnataka	Neg	Neg
Kerala	Neg	42.6
Lakshadweep	Neg	NC
Madhya Pradesh	48.3	44.7
Maharashtra	Neg.	25.6
Manipur	97.7	100.0
Meghalaya	61.3	100.0
Mizoram	52.6	100.0
Nagaland	88.6	100.0
Orissa	Neg	NC
Pondicherry	Neg	NC
Punjab	NC	Neg
Rajasthan	NC	59.0
Sikkim	Neg	100.0
Tamil Nadu	Neg	NC
Tripura	3.8	NC
Uttar Pradesh	32.4	59.1
Uttarakhand	53.3	58.0
West Bengal	34.9	86.6
ALL INDIA	39.0	53.3

Prices of essential foodgrains

32. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has made any assessment of the prices of essential pulses and foodgrains in the open market and under the public distribution system in the last one year;

(b) whether Government is considering any measures to improve the quality of PDS in the country;

(c) whether more items would be allowed to sell through the PDS; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Government continuously monitors prices of essential foodgrains (including pulses) namely, rice, wheat, atta (wheat), gram dal, arhar dal, moong dal, urad dal and masur dal. Price variation of retail prices of these commodities over the last year at Delhi is given in the Statement (*See* below). Rice and wheat is distributed through PDS. Central Issue Price (CIP) of rice and wheat has not been changed since July, 2002.

(b) Following measures have been taken to strengthen TPDS.

(i) Involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the functioning of TPDS to bring more transparency and accountability.

(ii) Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 notified to maintain supplies and distribution of essential commodities.

(iii) A nine-point action plan launched based on the findings of Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) and ORG-MARG evaluation report.

(iv) To keep a continuous watch on the scheme concurrent evaluation has been taken up in 26 States and UTs. A NCAER report received in respect of 12 States reveal improvement in functioning of TPDS in some States.

(v) Revised Citizen's Charter has been issued to make operation of TPDS transparent.

(vi) Instructions have been issued to introduce monthly certification by Village Panchayats/Vigilance Committees/Urban Local Bodies/Self Help Groups for delivery of foodgrains to the ration card holders.

(vii) Organising training programmes for PDS functionaries and members of vigilance committees.

(viii) Proposal to computerize TPDS operations at National/State/Block levels during the 11th Plan period.

(ix) Introduction of Global Positioning System (GPS) by Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu and Delhi Governments for tracking the movement of vehicles carrying TPDS commodities.

(x) Publicity-cum-awareness programme.